

# Frequently Asked Questions:

## Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling and Disaster Behavioral Health Services

**Give or get help dealing with stress and other physical and emotional effects**

### **1. What services are available in my community to help with stress and other physical and emotional effects of a disaster?**

Before facing a disaster, many people are not aware of the community resources and services that are available to help. The Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling program, through a partnership between Texas Health and Human Services and local providers, provides free crisis counseling, education and referrals to other recovery resources.

### **2. How long is the program available?**

Texans Recovering Together crisis counseling programs are FEMA-funded grants, available through the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Assistance and Emergency Relief Act following a federally declared disaster. They may vary in length from 60 days to a year following the disaster declaration.

### **3. How can I help connect an adult, child, or teen experiencing stress or other behavioral or mental health effects from a disaster to people who can help?**

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional distress or substance use crisis:

- Call the SAMHSA [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) at 800-985-5990 24-hours-a-day (for Spanish, press 2) or text TalkWithUs to 66746 for support and counseling.
- For veterans, call the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) at 800-273-8255 24-hours-a-day and press 1, or send a text message to 838255.

If you or someone you know is at risk of self-harm:

- Contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 800-273-8255 24-hours-a-day.

If you or someone you know is in need of non-crisis substance use or mental health services (or other disaster-related services/resources):

- Dial 2-1-1 to be connected to a mental health or substance use service provider in your area and for other disaster-related information and resources.

If you or someone you know could benefit from crisis counseling from the Texans Recovering Together crisis counseling program:

Contact 2-1-1 to be connected to an HHS partner providing crisis counseling services in your area.

- Visit : <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/mental-health-crisis-services/disaster-behavioral-health-services>

#### **4. What can I do to help people experiencing stress and other physical and emotional effects of a disaster?**

Help them find resources and people who can provide or refer them to the help they need. Encourage them to get help, listen to them, remind them they are not alone and encourage healthy stress management and coping.

### **Signs of stress and other physical and emotional effects often experienced after disasters**

#### **1. I am stressed out and feel emotional – are those common reactions to experiencing a natural or human-caused disaster?**

People experience disaster events differently, but a disaster touches everyone who witnesses it. Stress and other physical and emotional effects are common and expected for people of all ages.

#### **2. Are there psychological or emotional phases most people experience after a disaster?**

Before a disaster, people may feel fearful, angry, or apprehensive about their lack of control. They also may feel guilty or blame themselves for not being prepared. People may experience shock, panic, or confusion. This is usually followed by a focus on protecting oneself, family, and friends and the desire to rescue or help others. Shortly after a disaster, people may feel a sense of optimism that everything will return to normal quickly, which may lead to feelings of disillusionment, stress, fatigue, and discouragement if this does not happen. It can take months or years for people to fully adjust to new circumstances and begin rebuilding their lives.

### **3. What are the signs to look for in adults?**

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people or interests
- Low or no energy
- Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- Increased drinking, smoking, or drug use
- Worrying
- Feeling guilty without knowing why
- Thinking of hurting oneself or others
- Difficulty adjusting to home or work life

### **4. What are the signs to look for in a child or teen?**

- Withdrawing from playgroups or friends
- Competing for attention
- Not wanting to leave home
- Lack of focus at school
- More aggression
- More conflicts with peers or parents
- Difficulty concentrating

### **5. How do I know if my or a family member's child or teen is more at-risk of experiencing stress and other physical and emotional effects of a disaster?**

Children and teens may be more at-risk of experiencing stress and other physical and emotional effects if they have survived a previous disaster, experienced temporary living arrangements, or if they have experienced the loss of any of the following in the disaster: property, parental employment, a loved one, friend or pet.